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Book Review

HODEK, I., et al. 1973. *Biology of Coccinellidae*. Academia, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague. Hard covers, size 7" x 11", 260 pages, 34 plates (16 in color), 58 photographs, classified index, 517 references. Price: \$41.00 U.S., from Dr. W. Junk Publishers, The Hague, Netherlands.

Aside from gradual accumulation of new knowledge about ladybird beetles, the study of Coccinellidae has enjoyed a resurgence of interest among coleopterists as well as ecologists. The failure of insecticides to control some economically important insect pests has accelerated developments in the field of biological control as a necessary alternative. The predaceous group of coccinellid beetles was intensively studied for its potential in biological control of coccids, mites and aphids. Unfortunately, only the coccid feeding species proved to be of practical value. On the other hand, the plant feeding members of this family, e.g. *Epilachna* spp., are highly destructive pests to leguminose and cucurbitaceous plantations (beans, squash).

The voluminous literature on predaceous Coccinellidae was previously reviewed by Hagen (1962) and Hodek (1967) in the Annual Review of Entomology, and the present volume is in effect an updated and enlarged version of these two earlier review articles. Similar to the Annual Review in its style and form, the literature is treated in the following nine subject categories (number of pages for each is indicated in brackets): taxonomy and morphology of adults (9); morphology and taxonomy of larvae with keys for their identification (16); variability and genetic studies (11); life history and biological properties (5); distribution in habitats (18); food relations (28); dormancy (34); enemies of Coccinellidae (15); effectiveness and utilization (17). Approximately one half of the text is occupied by graphs, figures, *et cetera* to illustrate the highlights of discussion.

Of the 19 color plates, the first three are a pictorial key to selected Palaearctic coccinellid larvae. This section is also supplied separately with the book for field use. The remaining 16 plates illustrate dorsal aspects of immature stages of some Palaearctic Coccinellidae, (4th instar larvae and pupae).

Hodek's "Biology of Coccinellidae" treats only the predaceous coccinellids with emphasis on studies of diapause. Much of the discussion is concentrated on Palaearctic species. One wonders for how many more years undue emphasis will be given to studies of the common European *Coccinella septempunctata* Linnaeus. The section on taxonomy is in general inadequate. Many significant references have been omitted.

The title of the book is pretentious, for it implies coverage of a more comprehensive body of information than is actually included. Much of the text has been borrowed directly or slightly modified from original sources. The information presented is not suf-

ficiently integrated or synthesized so the text is disjointed. At the back of the book are 58 photographs many of which are of questionable value because they are technically poor or illustrate insignificant information. These deficiencies as well as syntactic and semantic errors could have been eliminated by careful editing.

The colored illustrations do not redeem the book. Thus, the price, which under ordinary circumstances might be regarded as only unreasonably high, seems outrageously high. Most of the information can be obtained from the articles in the Annual Reviews of Entomology, referred to above. Xerox copies of them could be obtained for a quarter of the price of Hodek's book. Wealthy entomological bibliophiles might want to purchase the latter item.

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